



7 BLUE NEWS

March 2006

Dear Parents and Family Members:

We are all ready for the change of seasons and even though it seems like it will never come, we all can be assured that in a few weeks we will see all the signs. While we welcome the warmer weather and the longer days, we must be sure that we help our students to realize that we have a little more than a third of the year left. Please review the dress code with your child. This will prevent discomfort for both them and us. We hate to have to remind or ask someone who has worn something they love that they have to cover up or remove a carefully chosen item of clothing.

Other changes you might begin to observe and that will be clearly evident here at school is the anticipation of becoming eight graders. Talk of math placements and their social explorations will be clearly evident for most students. We remind you that this can be a very difficult time for both students and their families because during the teen years they begin to pull away and seem driven to chart their own course. It requires a fine balance between giving them reasonable levels of freedom and supervision. Try to spend more time listening than talking and let them know you will need to know specifics and details regarding their activities and whereabouts. As all parents are aware one of the most challenging areas to monitor is the internet. The news media certainly make this apparent almost on a daily basis.

This is a good time of year to evaluate the required supplies and the state of their notebooks and back packs. All books should still be covered and the covers should be in good condition. A list of the materials needed is provided below.

The final reminder involves the MCAS test schedule for March. Please try to make every effort to have your child in school on time for these exams. Students who arrive late may not be able to take the exam on that day. There are make up days, but students generally do better when the exam is taken on the day of the actual exam. Preparation for the exams is taking place here at school and the only additional assistance needed is to make sure that they have a good night's rest and a nutritious breakfast.

Seven Blue Team Teachers

Supply List

- one (1) 2 1/2" or larger trapper keeper with four sections
- one 1" dark blue binder with zipper pouch and inside pockets
- one (1) large zippered pouch
- two (2) packages of page dividers *
- lined notebook paper (reinforced paper or box of reinforcements) *
- black flair pens (you will need one ALL year) *
- two (2) erasable black or blue pens *
- one (1) red pen *
- ruler-standard/metric
- one (1) set of colored pencils *
- one (1) set of colored markers *
- Texas Instrument T136 or higher scientific calculator
- yellow high-lighter (VERY IMPORTANT!!) *
- glue stick
- pencils

Important Notice
After School Help Days

Monday - Language Arts - Mrs. Moran

Tuesdays – by arrangement

Wednesday – Social Studies - Mr. Ponticelli

Thursday – Math – Mrs. Robbins and Science – Mrs. Scibelli

Other times can be arranged with the individual teachers should it be necessary.

Language Arts

We have completed the unit focused on Short Stories. Short stories by noted authors, O. Henry, Edgar Allen Poe, Jack London and Rudyard Kipling, along with some less celebrated authors have been read, and examined. The students have explored the characteristics and format of the short story genre. Examples of the development of character, theme, plot and setting have presented and studied. Several assessments were used to evaluate progress. These included quizzes, writing assignments, plot line graphs and a summative test.

Currently the focus has shifted to preparation for the MCAS test. We have completed several open response questions drawn from prior year's MCAS assessments and we are currently completing a five-paragraph essay in preparation for the long composition portion of the test. The goal is to help them develop and practice the skills needed to be successful on the test in which will take place in the next few weeks.

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Math

In math the students have been working with Ratio – Rate – Proportion, Scale & Similarity, and percents. We will be wrapping up this unit by the end of the trimester. The next area that will be covered is geometry. The students will have a quick review of previously covered material on perimeter and area of regular shaped figures. Then we will quickly move into area, volume, and surface area of irregular shaped figures. They will learn key math ideas like a figure has symmetry if a reflection or rotation of the figure is identical to the original. Then when you slide, translate, reflect, or rotate a geometric figure you create a transformation. This concept puts together material learned in the first

trimester 3. This puts things right in alignment for starting the Algebra program in grade 8.

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Science

In science, we have completed the Genetics Unit. By now, you have seen and signed the tests. We updated the classification system with new information on Domains and new Kingdoms. We will study each of the kingdoms in the months ahead. Our first Kingdoms will be those that include bacteria. We have worked on a research project called the “Wanted Posters”. These are designed to look like wanted posters seen in police departments. Each student was given a name of a disease caused by a bacteria or virus. This project is worth a test grade and was handed in on Friday, Feb. 17th with a bibliography, notes page, wanted poster and rubric. Each student should have presented his or her disease by now and you will be asked to sign the poster grade this week. The test on this unit was Friday March 3rd these also will be coming home for signatures this week. Please remember that each signature is worth a homework grade! The next Kingdom we will study will be the Kingdom Protista.

This week we will be walking over to the UMass Worcester Foundation to participate in a lab on onion DNA. I have asked the students to dress for the weather, as we will go no matter what the weather is. The next UMass lab will be in June. Thank you Mrs. Sooy and Mrs. Bean for coming with us!

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